SCENE III. The Walls of Athens.

Enter Two Senators, and a Messenger.

1 *SEN.* Thou hast painfully discover'*!; are his files As full as thy report ?

MESS. I have spoke the least: Besides, his expedition promises Present approach.

2 SEN. We stand much hazard, if they bring not Timon.

MESS. I met a courier[1], one mine ancient friend[2];—

Whom, though in general part we were oppos'd, Yet our old love made a particular force,'

Dear may, in the present instance, signify *immediate,* or *imminent.* It is an enforcing epithet with not always a distinct meaning. To enumerate each of the seemingly various senses in which it may be supposed to have been used by our author, would at once fatigue the reader and myself.

In the following situations, however, it cannot signify either *dire* or *dreadful:*

" Consort with me in loud and *dear* petition." *Troilus and Cressida.*

« ,,————Some *dear* cause

" Will in concealment wrap me up a while." *King Lear.*

STEEVENS.

It seems, in all these instances, to mean—greatest, most important. So, in Othello:

Ic For since these arms of mine had seven years* pith,, " Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used " Their *dearest* action in the tented field."

See vol. ix. p. 257, where Mr. Malone gives the same explanation. BOSWELL.

[1] — a COURIER,] The players read—a *currier.* STEEVENS.

[2] — ONE mine ancient friend;] Mr. Upton would read—once, mine ancient friend. STEEVENS.